

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

ACDA-07 MC-02 /068 W

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4239

INFO AMEMBASSY PARMARIBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0389

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GY, NS

SUBJECT: GUYANESE ANXIOUS OVER SURINAM PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT

SUMMARY: SURINAM'S PRIME MINISTER AARON'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON HAS CAUSED GUYANESE ANXIETIES TO RISE. FONMIN WILLS HAS EXPRESSED FEARS THAT AARON'S VISIT MIGHT SOMEHOW PREJUDICE GUYANA, OR RESULT IN TRANSFERS OF US ARMS TO SURINAM, OR PERHAPS IN A US DECISION TO POUR MONEY INTO CAPITALIST SURINAM WHILE DENYING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SOCIALIST GUYANA. AS PART OF OUR EFFORTS TO RESTORE A MEASURE OF CONFIDENCE HERE AND REDUCE GUYANESE FEARS, I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF AARON'S VISIT WHICH I COULD APPROPRIATELY PASS CONFIDENTIALLY TO WILLS BEFORE HE GETS IT FROM THE PRESS.

1. SURINAM'S PRIME MINISTER, HENK AARON MADE A 30 MINUTE STOPOVER AT TIMERHI AIRPORT FEBRUARY 18 WHILE ENROUTE TO WASHINGTON. NEXT DAY, THE GUYANA "CHRONICL" PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE AND A LARGE PICTURE OF WILLS AND AARON SMILINGLY GREETING EACH OTHER. AARON WAS QUOTED THAT HE EXPECTED TO MEET SECRETARY VANCE ON FEBRUARY 25. THE ARTICLE REPORTED THAT WILLS AND AARON DISCUSSED THE STATE OF GUYANA-SURINAM RELATIONS. IT WAS NOTED
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THAT THE LAST OFFICIAL CONTACT BETWEEN GUYANA AND SURINAM HAD TAKEN PLACE IN NOVEMBER 1975 WHEN WILLS WENT TO PARAMARIBO FOR SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS. AARON WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS COUNTRY'S POLICY OF GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS, DISCUSSIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF SURINAM ESTABLISHING AN EMBASSY IN GUYANA. DECLARING THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR SURINAM

TO BE REINTEGRATED INTO LATIN AMERICA, AARON RECALLED THAT A STUDY ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SURINAM ENTERING THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY REGIONAL SYSTEM WAS NEARING COMPLETION.

2. APPARENTLY NOT ALL WAS SMILES BETWEEN WILLS AND AARON. WILLS TELEPHONED ME FEBRUARY 19 TO SAY THAT PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) LEADERS, INCLUDING ACTING PRIME MINISTER REID, WERE UPSET. WILLS ALSO WAS OBVIOUSLY WORRIED. HIS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE USG-GOG RELATIONS REMAINED ON SHAKEY GROUND. ANTI-US ELEMENTS, HE ALLEGED, WERE SAYING THAT THE AARON VISIT TO THE US AND THE WASHINGTON POST STORY OF CIA LINKS TO BURNHAM WERE DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO EMBARRASS GUYANA. I RESPONDED THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS WERE NONSENSE. WILLS REPLIED THAT AARON HAD HINTED HE WOULD DISCUSS ARMS SUPPLIES WHILE IN WASHINGTON. WILLS ALSO EXPRESSED RENEWED CONCERN OVER THE USG DETERMINATION LAST YEAR THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE US NATIONAL INTEREST TO SELL AND/OR PROVIDE ARMS TO SURINAM. HE SAID THAT IF THE US SHOULD MAKE SUCH A DECISION CONCERNING SURINAM, IT SHOULD BE EVENHANDED AND MAKE THE SAME DETERMINATION FOR GUYANA. HE ALLEGED THAT SURINAM STILL HAD INTENTIONS OF TAKING GUYANESE TERRITORY.

3. WILLS ALSO APPEARED CONCERNED THAT AARON'S VISIT PRIOR TO HIS OWN MIGHT PREJUDICE GUYANA'S IMAGE. HE WONDERED WHY AARON HAD BEEN GIVEN AN APPOINTMENT IN FEBRUARY WHEN HE COULD NOT GET ONE UNTIL MARCH. WILLS ALSO HOPED THAT THE US WOULD NOT DECIDE TO MAKE A "SHOW CASE" COMPARISON OF GUYANA AND SURINAM BY DENYING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO GUYANA WHILE ADDING TO THE ALREADY "MASSIVE" INJECTION OF DUTCH CAPITAL INTO SURINAM. HE URGED THAT THE US NOT MAKE DISTINCTIONS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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ITS TREATMENT OF THE TWO COUNTRIES.

4. I TRIED TO SOOTHE WILLS BY ASSURING HIM THAT I WAS SURE THAT AARON'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON WOULD HAVE NO ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FOR GUYANA OR FOR WILLS' TRIP. I SAID THAT THE POLICY OUTLINED IN EX-SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER OF JUNE 4, 1976 CONCERNING US ARMS POLICY HAD NOT CHANGED. WILLS REPLIED THAT HE AND BURNHAM HAD NEVER FULLY BELIEVED KISSINGER'S ASSURANCES. I TOLD WILLS THAT I FELT HE SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH SPECIFIC THINGS THAT GUYANA SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE US AND NOT BE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT AARON MIGHT SAY ABOUT GUYANA IN WASHINGTON.

5. COMMENT: IN THIS INSTANCE, WILLS MAY HAVE PERSONALLY BEEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF AARON'S VISIT THAN WERE HIS COLLEAGUES, BECAUSE HE HAS A GOOD AMOUNT OF PERSONAL PRESTIGE RESTING ON HIS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE US. HE IS OBVIOUSLY FEARFUL THAT THE US WILL DO SOMETHING IN ADVANCE OF HIS VISIT WHICH WOULD SEEM TO SHOW FAVORITISM

FOR SURINAM, OR WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A SLIGHT TO HIM
OR GUANA. AS PART OF THE COSMETICS OF DEALING WITH THE GOG,
IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THE DEPARTMENT COULD PROVIDE ME WITH SUCH
INFORMAPION CONCERNING AARON'S VISIT AS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE
TO PASS TO WILLS CONFIDENTIALLY BEFORE HE LEARNS OF THE RESULTS
OF AARON'S DISCUSSIONS WITH US OFFICIALS FROM OTHER SOURCE OR
FROM THE NEWSPAPERS.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: PFOR, GY, NS, US, (AARON, HENK)
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